

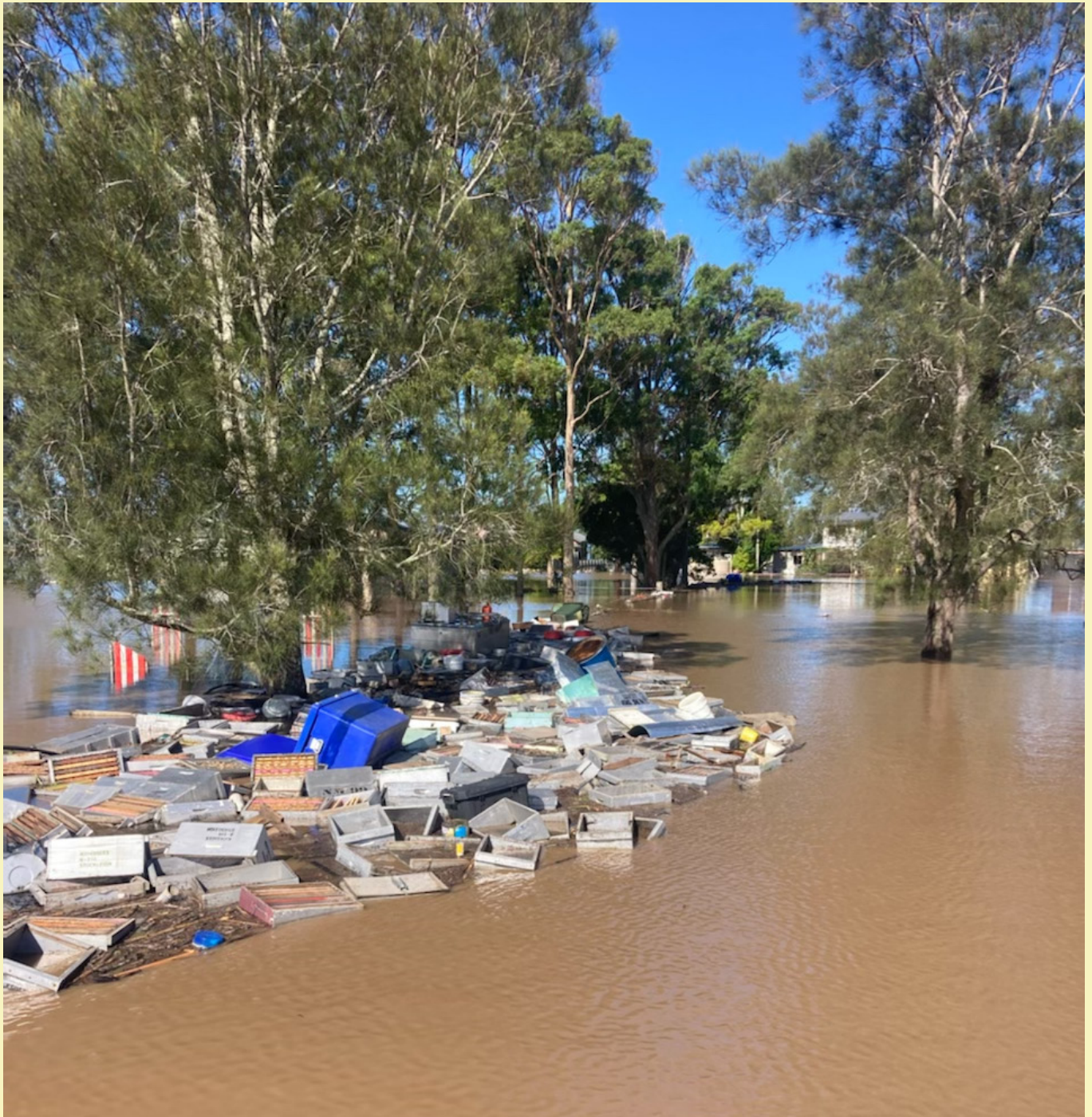
AUSTRALIA'S

# HONEYBEE NEWS



“The Voice of the Beekeeper”  
[www.nswaa.com.au](http://www.nswaa.com.au)

Volume 15 Number 2  
March - April 2022



## *Inside:*

*Special Lift Out - AGM Information Pack*  
*Bee Tech Challenge pg 17*  
*NSWAA Bee Hive Incentive Program pg 18*

# DENMAR APIARIES



## QUEEN BEES

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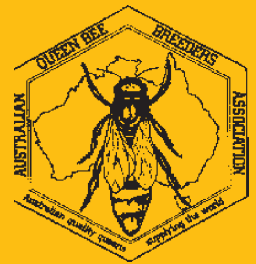
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**Cover Photo  
Floods Nth NSW 2022**

**Photo by  
Steve Fuller**



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**PRESIDENT: Steve Cunial** PO Box 771 GRIFFITH NSW 2680 Mob: 0448 627 291  
Email: [steve.cunial@nswaa.com.au](mailto:steve.cunial@nswaa.com.au)

**VICE PRESIDENT: Brian Woolfe** 18 Dumaresq St GLEN INNES NSW 2370 Mob: 0429 032 019  
Email: [brian.woolfe@nswaa.com.au](mailto:brian.woolfe@nswaa.com.au)

**Ray Hull** PO Box 36 KOOTINGAL NSW 2340 Mob: 0407 469 176 Email: [ray.hull@nswaa.com.au](mailto:ray.hull@nswaa.com.au)  
**Therese Kershaw** 151 Shinglehill Way GUNDAROO NSW 2620 Mob: 0428 857 634  
Email: [therese.kershaw@nswaa.com.au](mailto:therese.kershaw@nswaa.com.au)

**Stephen Fuller** 70 Washpool Road CLARENZA NSW 2460 Mob: 0488 434 498 Email: [steve.fuller@nswaa.com.au](mailto:steve.fuller@nswaa.com.au)

**SECRETARY/TREASURER: Robyn Lewis** PO Box 117 Narellan NSW 2567  
Mob: 0466 269 811 Email: [info@nswaa.com.au](mailto:info@nswaa.com.au) Website: [www.nswaa.com.au](http://www.nswaa.com.au)



# AUSTRALIA'S HONEYBEE NEWS

The official Journal of the NSW Apiarists' Association (NSWAA)

www.nswaa.com.au

Email: honeybeenews@icloud.com

Published Bi-Monthly ISSN 1835 6621

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**Copy Deadline for Next Issue of Australia's Honeybee News  
Friday 20 April 2022**





# PRESIDENT'S REPORT



## Presidents Report March 2022

Firstly, our thoughts go out to those affected by the flooding in Northern NSW and SE QLD as well as other parts of coastal NSW. The loss of life, property and livestock has been devastating. There are reports of thousands of hives lost as well as shed and extracting equipment. We urge all affected businesses to take advantage of the NSW Rural assistance Authority grants of up to \$75000

As the water subsidies SHB has become a real problem with reports of hundreds of further hive losses.

La Nina, looks like extending well in Autumn, which will affect weather patterns and hopefully set up a good spring and summer later in the year.

Honeyland is rapidly approaching and its pleasing to report that all the honey for this year's event has been donated and the call for volunteers has been successful, we look forward to educating the public regarding the importance of bees and promoting pure Australian honey.

On the 28<sup>th</sup> of February we held an executive meeting in Tamworth, it was well attended by branch delegates. I thank everyone for making the effort to attend and participating in the day's discussions, we were able to learn what the main issues of our members are and address them going forward. We had the BPass team in attendance, giving an update. They were able to hear first hand the concerns of our members. We thank them for continued efforts and look forward to hearing of progress made at our AGM.

Memberships are now due; renewals can be done through the website or via the form in this edition. I also encourage everyone to register for our **AGM**, its being held on the 7<sup>th</sup> of June at the Rydges Parramatta. Please register via the **website** or on the form in this edition.

We have organised morning tea and lunch which will

be honey themed, to be included, a great opportunity to catch up with friends and have a chat. Registrations **must** be submitted by the 20<sup>th</sup> of May to have catering included! We have organised Dave Mendes as an international guest speaker he will give an overview of beekeeping in the USA and the challenges that they are facing. We will also have updates from the various NSW DPI staff and researches. The agenda as well as registration forms and nomination for executive council are included in this edition.

I encourage everyone to get behind the 4th Australian Congress to be Held at Rosehill Gardens in Sydney from the 8<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> June, celebrating the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the arrival of Honey bees to Australia, it promises to be a fantastic event for our industry. An enormous amount of work has gone into organising the event, speakers and tradeshow.

Steve Cunial  
President NSWAA

## ARE YOU A BEEKEEPER IMPACTED BY THE RECENT FLOODS?

The following support is available nationally through Hive Aid - funded by Rural Aid:

1 x \$500 country card (pre-paid Visa card)  
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### HOW TO REGISTER

All impacted beekeepers, listed as primary producers, are encouraged to register for assistance via:  
<https://faa.ruralaid.org.au/farmer-registration>

When registering for assistance, please ensure you indicate you are a beekeeper.

All applications are treated with strict confidentiality by Rural Aid.



## Cover Photos

Do you have a bee related photograph that you would like to see on the cover of Australia's Honeybee News?

Email it to  
[honeybeenews@icloud.com](mailto:honeybeenews@icloud.com)



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 Claye Cooper, Eungai NSW  
 Elisa Dalla Valle, Jamberoo NSW  
 Bruce Dunbar, Kiama NSW  
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 Ben Hinkleman, Wagga Wagga NSW  
 Keith Parker, Hartley NSW  
 Steven Richards, East Maitland NSW  
 Patrick Roberts, Batemans Bay NSW  
 Alyssa Staggs, Gilgai NSW  
 Tim Walsh, Bathurst NSW  
 Angus Watt, Heddon Greta NSW  
 Kher Wang (Calvin) Yeoh, Stanmore NSW  
 Jason Parsell, Tolland NSW

## 2022 AGM and Conference Dates

**NSW Apiarists Association**  
 7 June - Rydges Parramatta

**Bee Industry Council of WA**  
 TBA (face to face cancelled)

**QLD Beekeepers Association**  
 23-24 June - Warwick RSL

**Victorian Apiarists Association**  
 20-21 May - Yorke on Lilydale

**South Australian Apiarists Association**  
 31 May - location TBA

**Tasmanian Beekeepers Association**  
 27-28 May - Launceston

**Australian Queen Bee Breeders Association**  
 TBA

**Honey Packers & Marketers Association**  
 TBA

**National Council of Crop Pollination Associations**  
 TBA

**Australian Honey Bee Industry Council**  
 12 June - Nesuto Apartment Hotel - Parramatta

## NSWAA Honour Roll 2021

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## BPASS

**Alex Russell**  
 Director Intensive Livestock  
 Livestock Systems Branch  
 NSW Department of Primary Industries Agriculture  
 PO Box 900  
 Dubbo NSW 2830  
 T: +61 2 6881 1212 | M: 0417 492 614 |  
 E: alex.russell@dpi.nsw.gov.au

**Nick Geoghegan**  
 Program Coordinator  
 Apiary Sites  
 Intensive Livestock  
 NSW Department of Primary Industries Agriculture  
 Locked Bag 21  
 Orange NSW 2800  
 T: +61 2 6391 3669 | M: +61 0407 849 516 |  
 E: nick.geoghegan@dpi.nsw.gov.au  
 My working days are Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursday mornings.

## COMPLIANCE

**Daryl Cooper**  
 Compliance Officer - Regulatory Operations Unit- RS  
 Apiaries  
 Compliance and Integrity Systems  
 NSW Department of Primary Industries Biosecurity &  
 Food Safety  
 2198 Irrigation Way East  
 PMB Yanco NSW 2703  
 Mobile: 0429 912 478 | E: daryl.cooper@dpi.nsw.gov.au

**Stephen Green**  
 Regulatory Officer  
 Biosecurity Compliance and RS Apiaries  
 Biosecurity NSW  
 Trenayr Rd  
 Junction Hill NSW 2460  
 T : 02 66401618 | F : 02 66447251 | Mob 0438977714 |  
 E : stephen.green@dpi.nsw.gov.au

## BIOSECURITY

**Mark Page**  
 Bee Biosecurity Officer Surveillance  
 NSW Department of Primary Industries Biosecurity and  
 Food Safety  
 Tocal Agricultural College  
 Paterson NSW 2421  
 T: 0409 299 415 | E: mark.page@dpi.nsw.gov.au

**Rod Bourke**  
 Bee Biosecurity Officer  
 Plant Biosecurity Prevention and Preparedness  
 NSW Department of Primary Industries Biosecurity and  
 Food Safety  
 Tocal Ag College  
 Tocal Rd  
 Paterson NSW 2421  
 T: 02 4939 8946 | F: 02 4939 8950 | M: 0438 677 195 |  
 E: rod.bourke@dpi.nsw.gov.au

## EDUCATION

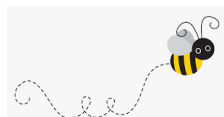
**Kelly Lees**  
 Education Officer Honey bees  
 Bee Program  
 Tocal College  
 NSW Department of Primary Industries  
 Tocal  
 Paterson NSW 2421  
 P: (02) 4939 8815 | E: kelly.lees@dpi.nsw.gov.au  
 Tuesday - Thursday

**Bianca Giggins**  
 Honey Bee Training Coordinator  
 Education  
 Tocal College  
 NSW Department of Primary Industries  
 T: +61 418 989 919 | E: bianca.giggins@dpi.nsw.gov.au

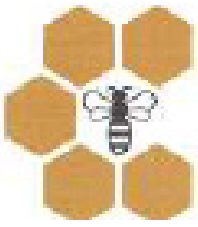
**Madlen Kratz**  
 Honey Bee Industry Development Officer  
 NSW Department of Primary Industries  
 815 Tocal Road  
 Paterson NSW 2421  
 T: +61 427 348 521 | E: madlen.kratz@dpi.nsw.gov.au



*Photo: Steve Fuller*







# AUSTRALIAN HONEY BEE INDUSTRY COUNCIL INC (AHBIC) NEWS

Full newsletter available from <http://honeybee.org.au>

## NEWS FROM THE CHAIR, Trevor

### Weatherhead AM

1. An update from the Executive on where we are with regard to a new CEO. The Executive are in the final throws of finalising the Position Description for the CEO. The opportunity was taken to update the Position Description. The position will soon be advertised.
2. AHBIC has been asked for assistance from the Australian Queen Bee Breeders Association (AQBBA) in making representations to Australia Post regarding problems with delivery of queen bees. If you have had problems please let our acting CEO know about these so we can put together a case to go to Australia Post. Please do this within the next week.
3. Elsewhere in the newsletter you will see the opportunity to comment on Australia's domestic organic regulatory framework. If you are in the organic business please avail yourself of the opportunity to make a submission.
4. The Congress Sub-committee is finalising the registration form for the 4th Australian Bee Congress to be held in Sydney in June. Make sure you have registered your expression of interest at the website <https://australianbeecongress.com.au/> This way you will be advised immediately registrations open. I look forward to seeing you in Sydney.
5. You will also see in this newsletter references to the NEXDOC upgrade. If you export honey or apicultural products, most likely beeswax, then you need to study and take part in the virtual drop in sessions to learn more. Thank you to those exporters who helped in the sessions with the Department to make sure the changes were practical and able to be carried out by our industry exporters.
6. With all the rain in south east Queensland and northern New South Wales I hope there have been no hives caught up in the floods. Big lots of rain. At my place we had over 500mms for the period but down the coast I know it was well over the one metre mark.

### NOTE FROM ACTING CEO, Danny Le Feuvre

It has been a busy 5 weeks for me, parachuting into the day to day running of AHBIC. To quote one of our former chairs, Peter McDonald "I thought I had a good understanding of what AHBIC did. I was astounded by the amount of work that is involved", 2018 chair report.

I thank Helen for the smooth transition that she facilitated and the amount of work Helen put into ensuring I had all the information to continue 'business as usual' for AHBIC.

Soon we will be able share the many 'fruits' of Helen's labour when the all new website goes live at the end of March, the National Beekeepers award program is launched and the 'Home sweet Home' campaign takes off in the coming months.

The Australian Queen Bee Breeders Association has requested the assistance of AHBIC to help drive a resolution to the multiple issues around the postage of queens. There are many anecdotal accounts of queens going astray but we need detailed cases that can be used to demonstrate the issues to Aust Post. If you have had issues please email AHBIC with details so we can catalogue the issues.

### Notice to Creditors – Riverina Beekeeping Supplies

Anyone who has been caught up in the unfortunate situation involving Riverina Beekeeping Supplies Pty Ltd and has paid money for goods that have not been delivered are encouraged to contact Matthew Cerato or Toby Daniel on (02) 6938 3800 or [admin@chamberlainssbr.com.au](mailto:admin@chamberlainssbr.com.au)

### Bee Industry Council of Western Australia (BICWA)

G'day,

The red gum still shows a good flower pattern, and the WA bees are pleased, as are the beekeepers!

It has been a short month, where BICWA was busy fine-tuning its membership sign up process and preparing for the first board meeting in 2022 (25th FEB).

There has not been any further industry engagement concerning the Forest Management Plan (FMP), although BICWA submitted its concern in the Department's appointment of an independent panel. This panel is established to guide the development of the new FMP and should consist of proven performers in forest restoration, ecology or conservation. We continue lobbying for our industry and the broader communities.

The Marketing team at UWA, sponsored by the Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) for Honey Bee Products, delivers on the 25th FEB an update on the 'WA honey promotion' project. This project analyzes honey marketing overseas and provides valuable input for honey packers.

Unfortunately, we have decided to cancel the conference for the third year in a row. We now hope for the 4th time lucky in 2023.

Talk to you next month.

Regards,  
Brendon Fewster - Chair



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# Bushfire Industry Update

## 28 Feb 2022

### Project Management

- Distribution of sampling materials to beekeepers so that their honeys and bees can be analysed and evaluated
- Ongoing construction of a website which will display updates on the progress of research as it continues (coming soon!)
- Coordination between the six main arms of the recovery project to ensure milestones are being met and progress is being made
- Bi-Monthly meetings commencing March 2022 to share information and ensure all parts of the Project are on track

### DPI Audit on NSW owned Lands

- Project charter drafted and circulated to Liz Frost, Alex Russell, Dee Carter. To be revised following feedback and sent to Stephen Targett this week.
- Project setup in DPI systems initiated. Expected to submit by end February 2022.
- Water NSW legacy permit-holder issue discussed with Steve Fuller – to be discussed further by SF with NSWAA exec to determine NSWAA preferred approach.

### DPI TOCAL Bee courses

Courses currently being programmed.

### CRC – Honey Testing (Jamie Ayton)

- We received four sample for this project in mid-December. We have not received any since. They are currently stored at 4°C. We have not begun analysis for a number of reasons.
  - We have yet to receive an updated contract for the project since the extension was granted. We are waiting for a decision regarding who our contract will be with so we can finalise the admin in our system and open a cost code that I can use for salaries and consumables. **Meeting on 22 Feb decided that due to CRC winding up in June that USYD would take over CRC WA contract for DPI honey testing.**
  - Regardless of the contract, we would prefer to wait for more samples prior to beginning analysis.
  - There is still some confusion regarding sample labelling. The samples we have received arrived without any submission form/notes. Prior to subsampling it would be worthwhile ensuring each sample has a unique identification code to ensure results from each laboratory relate to the same sample.

### When Bee Foundation – planting guides and introducing technology to Beekeepers

We are tracking ahead of our budget and plan We have completed and published 4 out of 10 Powerful Pollinator Planting Guides covering;

- North Coast NSW
- New England Tablelands
- Riverina
- Alps and Southern Highlands

All available for free download from here

<https://www.wheenbeefoundation.org.au/our-work/projects/powerful-pollinators/>

Printed hard copies are with printers at the moment and we are awaiting delivery. Once delivered, we will also be offering these via our website online shop for individuals, but can provide to groups on an as-needs basis.

Additional bioregional Guides are under development.

- Western Sydney Guide has been received by us and it is currently being typeset, so should be available for free download from our website link above in the next few weeks.

Other Guides commissioned and in various stages of development

- Illawarra including Dapto, Gerringong, Berry, Nowra etc (Sydney Basin Bioregion – coastal)
- Southern Highlands, Bowral, Mittagong etc (South Eastern Highlands Bioregion)
- Orange, Oberon, Bathurst etc (South Eastern Highlands Bioregion)
- South coast -Batemans bay, Narooma etc and inland (South East Corner Bioregion)
- Woolgoolga/Coffs Harbour region NSW tbc

The second part of our funding was for 4 x NSW beekeepers to participate in the 5 Bees program. This is well underway with beekeepers having completed 6 sessions each. The first program review is underway seeking to gain insights and feedback from participants on this new program.

The third component is the NSW network of Bee Friendly Farming certified farms. The program nationally is progressing very well - beyond our wildest expectations. In the first 6 months, the program (nationally) has grown from nothing to having over 30,000ha Bee Friendly Farming certified land over 5 states of Australia spanning almonds, apples, avocado, cropping, grazing, vineyards and nursery production enterprises. Our BFF Tree grants awarded last year will help to establish more than 80ha of pollinator habitat on farms across 4 states.

The NSW numbers for BFF are currently still small but will grow; 4 NSW farms are BFF certified representing a total of 295ha, including apple, macadamia/tropical fruit

and grazing enterprises.

## UTS Prebiotic Nural

### Project 5: New honey markets – honey as a health food to fight gut infections

- We have recruited a PhD student, Kathleen Schell, to work on this project. She is finalising her enrolment documents and should be ready to kick off in March 2022. Kathleen will be supervised jointly by Dr Nural Cokcetin (University of Technology Sydney) and Dr Erin Shanahan (University of Sydney) and the project will be undertaken across both universities. Her project will focus on understanding the effect of honey consumption on the gut microbiome via mouse models (where diet is strictly controlled) and laboratory models – looking at both a healthy gut and a compromised gut, like what is seen during inflammation or infection
- We are planning to work with international collaborators to characterise the composition of our honey samples to identify bioactive components that contribute to its prebiotic activity and can be used to assess the prebiotic potential of future honey samples
- We are also working with select honey samples from those collected for project 6 to allow us to link bee health/microbiome with honey prebiotic activity, composition and floral source
- We will include the two honeys (yellow box and mugga ironbark, Goldfields Apiaries) used in our human study from our current AgriFutures project and collate the data from the human trials with those from the mouse and laboratory models in this project to determine the overall prebiotic effect of honey
- We have visited Tocal College in early February to collect the first batch of honey and bee samples for this study, with another visit scheduled at next harvest

## USYD Dee Carter - Healthy Forests -Active Honey

- Dr Kenya Fernandes was recruited to the post-doctoral fellowship on this project in mid 2021. Unfortunately, the COVID lockdown followed by the university Christmas closure prevented much work until around mid-January 2022, but Kenya has been delving into the literature, working on our research strategy and learning how to dissect bees!
- We have recruited two honours students to work on two honey projects:
  - 1. Developing a bioassay to rapidly determine honey activity; and
  - 2. Determining the impact of hive health on the bee microbiome. They will start on their projects next week.
- We are planning to visit Tocal College in March

to gain insights into how honey is produced and harvested, and to plan experiments on hive manipulation and honey activity with Liz Frost.

- We have requested honey and bee samples from selected beekeepers to allow us to link the bee microbiome with the honey that is produced.

Feb 2022

Collated by Stephen Targett

## SANTOS give Beekeepers Access to Good Quality Water in the Pilliga

Good quality water for bees in the Pilliga is now available via SANTOS granting access to one of the bores they have installed. Below are the protocols for accessing this water.

Use of the bore is available to all members of the NSW Apiarists Association but a basic induction into the use of the equipment and access is required to be undertaken before water may be taken. Please notify SANTOS at least 7 days prior to needing the water on (02) 6792 9000 so the induction can be arranged.

The standpipe is located at Bibblewindi 5 water bore. The bore is accessible by following East along X-Line Road from the Newell Highway, then turning left into Garlands Road and following it past the Bibblewindi Compressor Station front gates to the site. From X-Line/Garlands Road intersection the drive is about 3km.

The water at the standpipe is of very good quality with salinity of 129 uS/cm electrical conductivity and a pH of 5.5.

To gain access the NSWAA has provided a registered lock at the site. Keys are available through contacting Brian Woolfe 0429 032 019 or Richard Willis 0428 323 812. A deposit of \$100 per key is required for NSWAA members and \$200 for non-members.





# What's in the honey pot: Comprehensive database to support honey quality assurance 22.02.22

Australian beekeepers know their honey is top shelf, and now a project funded by AgriFutures Honey Bee & Pollination Program is giving beekeepers and the industry the scientific evidence and confidence to support their premium-product claims locally and globally.

The chemical composition of honey project, led by chemist Jamie Ayton from the NSW Department of Primary Industries (NSW DPI), is establishing world-standard testing protocols to determine exactly what Australian honey is made of and to create an Australian honey quality assurance standard.

The project seeks to provide evidence to protect the Australian honey industry from adulteration, improve the traceability of Australian honey and based on their unique product help Aussie beekeepers receive a premium price. Standards to protect the industry and support Australian honey's premium brand

With no formal quality standards, or recognised testing protocols in place, the domestic industry is compromised as it cannot currently state that all Australian-produced honey is unadulterated.

Negative media associated with Australian honey and reports of adulteration of Australian honey highlighted the need for these standards and an Australian honey chemistry database.

“The information we are collecting, in association with data from other analytical techniques, will help determine the composition of Australian honey. If in the future, allegations are made about the provenance of the product beekeepers and industry will be able to use the results to confirm the composition and provenance, hence offering market protection,” said Jamie.

Jamie believes the project has the potential to achieve far more than market protection alone.

“An Australian honey chemistry database is also an important component in developing premium products and strategies for future industry development. In time we would like to see Australian honey, tested using these protocols, branded with an internationally recognised and revered quality assurance (QA) mark,” said Jamie.

## Defining our difference

Commercial beekeeper and member of AgriFutures Honey Bee & Pollination Advisory Panel, Steve Fuller, has been providing honey samples for the project in an effort to help define Australian honey's uniqueness and to protect its global reputation.



*Commercial beekeeper and member of AgriFutures Honey Bee & Pollination Advisory Panel Steve Fuller*

“Nowhere else in the world produces honey like Australian honey. We have more than 700 native floral resources – from eucalypts to rainforest species – for our bees to gather nectar to produce honey.

“With such diverse flora, it's unrealistic to think that the same standards can be used to test Australian honey as our international counterparts when, at its core, the ‘ingredients’ are so different. But, at the moment we don't have any baseline data to 100% prove the origin and quality of Australian honey,” said Steve.

That's where Jamie and his team at NSW DPI come in, using existing international honey standards, they have developed Australian laboratory-based tests to establish the baseline data on the composition of Australian honey and have successfully verified the accuracy of these tests. They are now applying these new protocols, to testing Australian honey samples – provided by east-coast based Australian beekeepers like Steve – to develop a comprehensive database of Australian honey profiles.



On the basis of Australia's diverse and unique floral sources, Jamie expects Australian honey to be different from honeys produced in other countries. Based on these differences, a critical component of the project for Jamie is to define what the Australian product is.

“The international standards for honey are developed in the northern hemisphere under European conditions.

Some of these parameters may not apply in Australia,” said Jamie.

“Through our testing protocols, we can define the differences, create awareness and build consumer confidence in our unique product offering.”

“Increasingly consumers are seeking assurance about where their food comes from, what is in their food and the potential health benefits of food.”

It is envisaged that based on this research the Australian honey bee industry will establish a commercial honey testing laboratory to provide commercial beekeepers with defensible and robust data on the chemical composition of their product to demonstrate the quality of their product and to support marketing efforts locally and globally.

### Progress to date

So far, using standardised methods from the International Honey Commission (IHC), the research team has established analytical methods required for honey quality analysis, including parameters such as: fructose, glucose and sucrose content, pH, moisture, electrical conductivity (EC), free acid, water insoluble solids, diastase number (enzyme activity) and hydroxymethylfurfural (HMF).

“We have used quality control samples from well-established laboratory proficiency programs to ensure the accuracy of the results,” said Jamie

“This means we are assured of the accuracy of the analytical methods we have developed in our laboratory compared against international methods.”

### What’s the buzz about?

Beekeepers from Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia, Victoria and Tasmania are being encouraged to be involved by supplying honey samples to develop a comprehensive picture of Australian honey.

“At no cost to beekeepers, we will supply sample jars, pay for postage, test their honey samples, produce a chemical analysis and provide individual results to participants,” explained Jamie.

“Some of the key attributes we test for, such as enzyme activity, electrical conductivity and moisture content, are impacted by temperature during extraction and processing, as well as storage conditions. Having hard data on these honey components can help Australian beekeepers to manage their processes for optimal product quality.”

Jamie also noted that beekeepers can compare their own results against industry average data, and in time he hopes to be able to develop the capacity to compare honeys on a regional basis.

“We are not a commercial testing service at the moment, but if the industry sees the benefit of the database and the opportunity of what is essentially a QA program, then our

hope would be to set up a commercial testing service for the honey industry,” said Jamie.

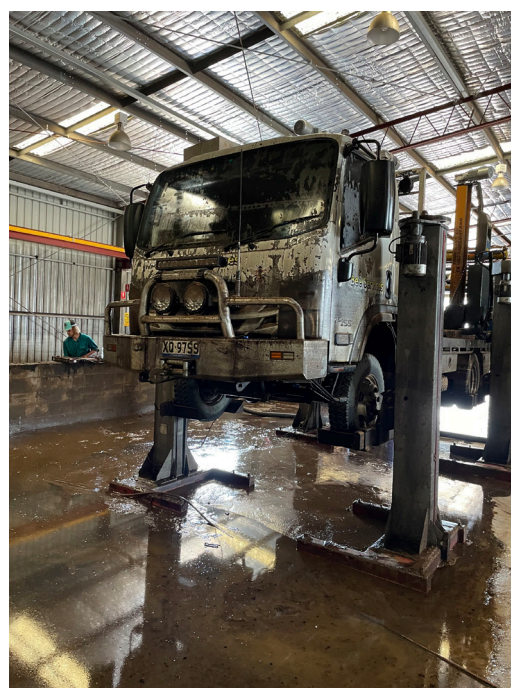
*The chemical composition of honey* project is a two-year project concluding in late 2022. While a complete database for the Australian honey industry requires a longer commitment (most likely up to five years to ensure seasonal variation is captured). *The chemical composition of honey* project will provide initial information, which can be used to establish an Australian honey standard that accurately reflects the composition of Australian honey.

Beekeepers interested in providing a sample can contact Jamie Ayton, NSW DPI via email [jamie.ayton@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:jamie.ayton@dpi.nsw.gov.au).

[For updates on the Honey Bee & Pollination Program and this project visit \[agrifutures.com.au/honey-bee-pollination\]\(http://agrifutures.com.au/honey-bee-pollination\)](#)

## Flood Photos

supplied by Steve Fuller





# Bee Tech Challenge

## 2022

Do you have the  
technology that bees need?

Pitch your tech today.

The Bee Tech Challenge is searching for market ready technology which provides solutions to key issues facing the industry including biosecurity, hive health, hive safety, and bushfire protection and preparedness.

Facilitated by the AgriFutures Honey Bee and Pollination Program, the Bee Tech Challenge is connecting beekeepers with startups, scaleups and innovators to support a brighter future for our bees.

Finalists will showcase and pitch their technology to beekeepers and other industry professionals at this year's 4th Australian Bee Congress in Sydney. Conference delegates will have the opportunity to vote for the technology that they see as most relevant and useful for the beekeeping industry.

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Applications are open now,  
closing at 12 noon AEST on 20 April 2022.

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*Read the T&Cs before you apply.*



# NSWAA BEE HIVE INCENTIVE PROGRAM

An opportunity for NSWAA members and business associates to support each other through the Bee Hive Incentive Program.

## NUPLAS APIARIST SUPPLIES

A **5% discount** is being offered by Nuplas Apiarist Supplies when placing online purchases.

This offer is exclusive to NSWAA financial members and is available from 1<sup>st</sup> March 2022 to 28<sup>th</sup> February 2023.

To redeem this offer, members are required to contact Nuplas Apiarist Supplies directly and provide them with their NSWAA membership number.

Each member will be issued a unique VIP code provided by Nuplas Apiarist Supplies.

This offer cannot be used in conjunction with any other discounts offered by **Nuplas Apiarist Supplies**

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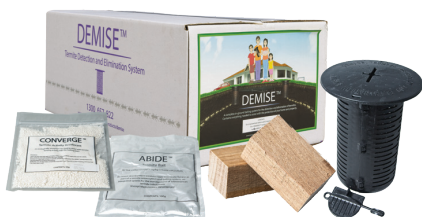


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250gr & 500gr  
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500gr Squeeze  
(Honey Comb)



500gr Upside  
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#### Non Tamper Proof Pails

500gr, 1kg, 1.5kg, 3kg, & 5kg Pail  
(500gr, 1kg, 1.5kg available in clear as well)



#### Tamper Proof Pails

1kg, 1.5kg Honey Pails &  
2.2L, 5L Pails



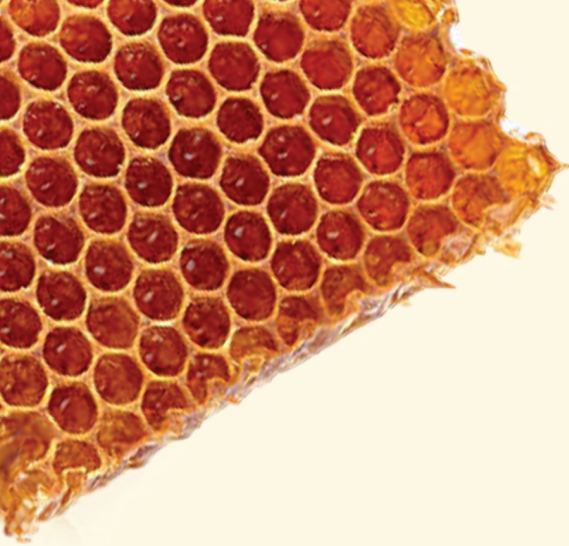
10L, 15L, 20L Pails

**AK**  
**AU KINGSUN**

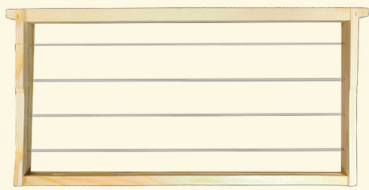
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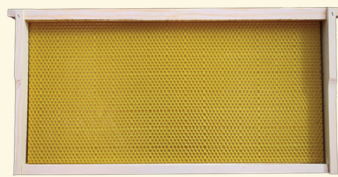




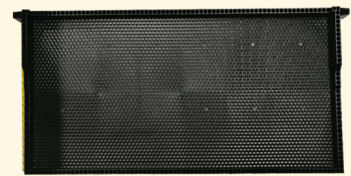
## Bee Frames - Wood and Plastic



Wood Frame Full Depth  
Assembled With Wire



Wood Frame Full Depth  
With Plastic Foundation  
(Not waxed)



Plastic Frame Full Depth

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## Plastic Beehive

### Plastic Beehive with 10 Frames

Material: food grade polypropylene

Thickness: 30mm

Working life: 30 years

Packing dimension: 60x50x44cm 13.8/kg

#### Features:

- UV resistant
- Thermal insulated increasing honey production
- Light weight for easy lifting and carrying
- Antioxidant plastic material for longer life expectancy
- Holds standard and full depth frames
- Easily assembled
- Digital Thermometer
- Built in ventilation
- No painting required

#### What you get:

##### 2 box hive consisting of:

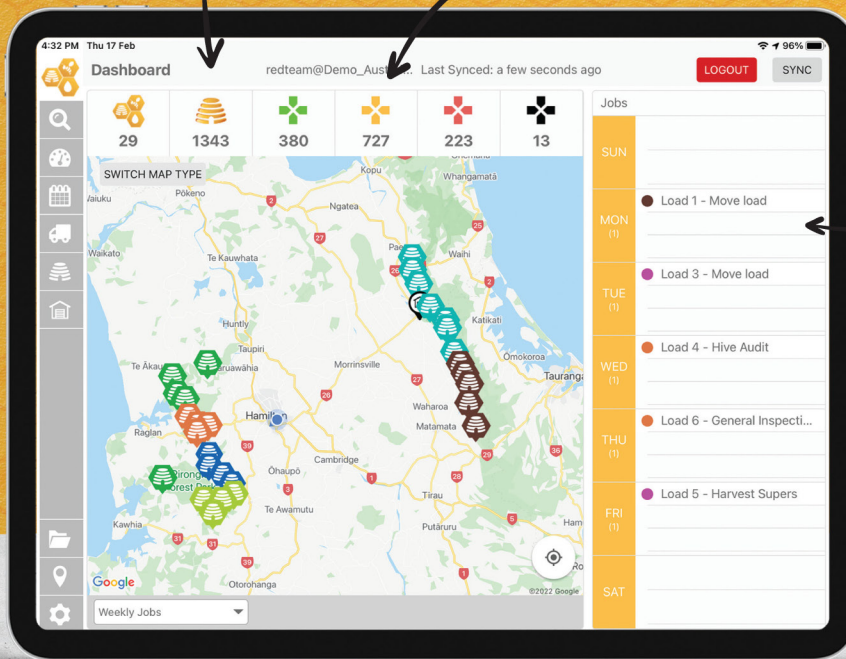
- 1 x ventilated top cover
- 1 x full size super
- 1 x Queen excluder
- 1 x brood box
- 1 x bottom board (including 2 feeders and pollen trap)
- 1 x Entrance reducer
- 4 x Lock, Latch connectors
- 1 x Temperature Gauge



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Department of  
Primary Industries

**AUTUMN IS SUGAR SHAKE SEASON**

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**CHECK YOUR BEES USING THE  
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INCURSION EARLY**

**SHAKE, INSPECT**

**CALL IF YOU SUSPECT**

External bee parasites such as  
varroa, tropilaelaps mite and braula fly  
have not been detected in NSW



Braula fly (top), varroa mite (right),  
tropilaelaps mite (bottom)



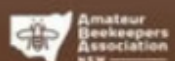
Braula fly on the thorax of a queen bee



Varroa mite feeds on a bee pupa

**IF YOU NOTICE ANYTHING UNUSUAL CALL THE EXOTIC PLANT PEST HOTLINE 1800 084 881  
FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT [WWW.DPI.NSW.GOV.AU/BIOSECURITY-BEES](http://WWW.DPI.NSW.GOV.AU/BIOSECURITY-BEES)**

Image credit (left) Food and Environmental Research Agency (Fera), Crown Copyright | Image credit (middle) Lindsay Bourke | Image credit (right) Scott Bevan, USDA



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A division of B-QUAL Australia Pty Ltd. ABN 37 096 945 694  
The Australian Honey Industry owned QA and Food Safety program

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# How to get certified:

**Step 1.** Make the decision to improve your business.

- (a) Go to: [www.Btrace.com.au](http://www.Btrace.com.au)
- (b) Pay joining fee of \$ 175.00 safely online, with our secure payment portal.  
This initial payment covers your 12 month membership, hive management app access and your annual desk audit.
- (c) you immediately become a member and can enjoy the B-TRACE advantages
- (d) Your receipt will show your B-TRACE ID number

**Step 2.** After payment receipt you will receive a supplier manual and access details to the B-TRACE app

**Step 3.** You are ready to go!  
Just start entering your profile and hive management data.

When you feel confident and have completed training manual details and have your app data up to date, go on line [www.btrace.com.au](http://www.btrace.com.au) go to self-audit page and apply for an audit.

Upon successful audit completion you will be issued an Audit Certificate and Audit ID number this is your key to full B-TRACE certification.

It is a requirement that each Enterprise is audited within 11 months of joining to maintain B-TRACE certification.

## WHO IS B-TRACE PROGRAM FOR?

Intended for small semi commercial and recreational beekeepers who:

- Manage or own total hive holding of 100 hives or less, and production/sales of less than 6,000 kg per year
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- Typically sell to:
  - Farmers Markets
  - Direct to consumers
  - Food stalls
  - Boutique shops, such as Bakeries, Fruit and Vegetable, Delicatessens, Restaurants and similar
  - Or, any other outlets





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- ▶ 100% naturally made from green bananas
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# Catch the Buzz

## BEE POLLEN AS FOOD

### Our History With Bee Pollen



*Ambrosia – The Food Of The Gods*

Our story starts over 100 million years ago. Our world was very different. Two huge land masses dominated, Gondwana in the South and Laurasia in the North. The landscape would have appeared very different to our modern world – towering conifer forests, the first flowering plants had just started to bloom; dinosaurs ruled the land, flying reptiles ruled the sky and giant marine reptiles ruled the sea. Our descendants were little more than small, nocturnal mammals living in the shadow of the mighty T-Rex, Iguanodon and Triceratops.

The first flowering plants hailed the introduction of the hero of our story – the bee. The oldest record we have of a bee, dates to over 100 million years ago, preserved perfectly in amber, and bees had probably been around for over 30 million years previously.

#### **Humans and bees**

Since the dawn of agriculture, humans have been in a relationship with bees. Nine thousand years ago our first interactions with bees were recorded on the walls of caves, and every civilization since has understood the benefits of this association. From honey to wax, royal jelly, venom, and bee pollen, the nutritional, medical, and health benefits of bee products are well documented and understood.

Honey might be the most obvious bee-human link, but bee pollen was even more venerated.

#### **A powder that gives life**

The ancient Egyptians called bee pollen “the powder that gives life.” The nutritious mix of nectar, flower pollen, enzymes, honey, wax, and bee secretions was placed in their tombs to nourish them in the next life. Bees were seen as the servants of the gods, delivering messages and healing powers.

In ancient Greece, bee pollen was called Ambrosia – the food of the Gods. It was said to be imbibed with the power of immortality and eternal youth. Its health benefits were well established and both the father of modern medicine, Hippocrates, and the philosopher Pythagoras prescribed bee pollen for its healing properties.

The Romans considered bee pollen to be a panacea. Roman soldiers carried dried pollen cakes with them to provide sustenance.

The ancient cultures of China, India, and the Far East have the same references to the power and therapeutical benefits of bee pollen. To many, it was a necessary dietary staple. Native Americans, like the Romans before them, carried bee pollen in bags around their necks to give them energy on long journeys.

In New Zealand, the Māori have a long tradition of using bee pollen for food. In 1881, the Reverend William Colenso stated, “another highly curious article of vegetable food, was the pungapunga, the yellow pollen of the raupo flower.” The pollen was regarded as a delicacy and used to make pua, a type of steamed bread.

#### **A complete food**

Bee pollen is regarded as one of the most complete foods in nature. It certainly has all the right ingredients, containing 30 percent protein, all the amino acids required for our diets, and an abundance of vitamins, minerals, trace elements, hormone precursors, carbohydrates, and fatty acids. It contains more amino acids, gram for gram, than fish, beef, cheese, or eggs.

Researchers at the Institute of Apiculture in Russia have shown “honeybee pollen is the richest source of vitamins found in nature in a single food”.

It is so complete as a food that we can survive on roughage, bee pollen, and water alone.

Millennia after early civilisations correctly identified its nutritional power, pollen is once again becoming an important part of the human diet. Modern researchers have analysed its constituents and work continues to comprehensively map its nutritional and medical benefits.

Bee pollen is linked to reduced inflammation, improved immunity, and wound healing, and is said to relieve the symptoms of menopause and help digestive issues, weight control, and depression. Whilst all the therapeutic benefits of bee pollen are still being researched, it is clear that bee pollen supports optimum nutrition.

The ancient Greeks saw it as the source of eternal youth; today we rightly regard it as a superfood.

<https://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/BU2111/S00024/our-history-with-bee-pollen.htm>



# Technical Specialist, Honey Bees Report

Elizabeth Frost

Technical Specialist, Honey Bees

Total Agricultural College, NSW Dept. of Primary Industries

T: 02 4939 8821 M: 0437 731 273 E: [elizabeth.frost@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:elizabeth.frost@dpi.nsw.gov.au)



## Flooding recovery for beekeepers

The 2022 floods across Eastern Australia have had wide-reaching effects on homes, farms and landscapes. Several North Coast beekeepers have had significant hive losses. If you haven't yet reported your losses please get in touch with the NSWAA, Bee Biosecurity Officer Rod Bourke or myself.

If you require emergency assistance to care for your hives as a result of the recent floods, call the Agriculture and Animal Services Hotline on 1800 814 647. Once your request is registered, staff will call you back to discuss your individual circumstances and help identify available assistance.

Available disaster and grant funding can be found here: [www.service.nsw.gov.au/floods/financial-assistance](http://www.service.nsw.gov.au/floods/financial-assistance)

**Found a washed up  
bee hive?  
Call 1800 814 647**



Figure 1. Hives lost to flooding should be reported to 1800 814 647.

## IMMEDIATE POST-FLOOD CLEANUP

After floodwaters recede and apiaries are safely accessible, quick management of living or dead hives is urgent. Any comb that went under water is potentially damaged and contaminated, and any brood that went under water is likely dead. This must be dealt with immediately if you want to give your hive any chance at recovery or if hives are dead, to prevent an explosion of small hive beetle populations.

1. **If the floodwaters were muddy and silty, comb must be culled and burnt.** This is necessary as your frames, a food-producing material, are now contaminated and no longer "food safe." Additionally, it is a big ask for your bees to rehabilitate this contaminated material and a target for small hive beetle, potentially creating even bigger problems.
2. **If floodwaters were clean and uncontaminated, prevent small hive beetle infestation** by removing frames of dead brood and installing small hive beetle

traps or harbourages. If small hive beetle larvae are already present, cull affected frames or potentially entire colonies depending on the severity of the infestation and colony strength.



Figure 2. Small hive beetle larvae populations can explode in flood damaged hives, even if the hive has initially survived the flood.

## 3. Assess your colony's likelihood and cost of recovery:

- a. Does the adult bee population justify the labour and inputs (i.e. new comb, supplemental feed, new queen) necessary to recover it to full strength and productivity?
- b. Is a laying queen present?
- c. Is it disease free?

Tough decisions are necessary if the answer to 3a, 3b or 3c above is "no." If the adult population is too small to justify the labour and inputs to bring it back up to production strength and it is disease and pest free, it could be combined with another colony. If the colony also has disease or pests present, it may be necessary to cull the entire colony. If the colony is weak and queenless and you have no access to mated queens, this may also be a chance to combine the remaining bees and salvageable comb with another colony. Where sufficient numbers of adult bees can cover any brood present, assess the overall space required according to available resources. We're in autumn, so reducing colony size according to the population is a management task we're already doing to prepare for winter.

4. **Where recovery is possible supplemental feed sugar syrup** and possibly protein supplement, though monitor for small hive beetle activity depending on the protein supplement. Remember, building new comb is only possible when your bees are on a nectar flow or receiving supplemental feed over and above their immediate needs for survival.

In times of scarce floral resources or recovery from drought, bushfire, or flood, the beekeeper should feed supplemental sugar syrup and protein (irradiated pollen shown in Figure 3) to firstly assist with the colony's recovery and second to maintain the colony in good condition for the next honey production or pollination event. For additional information on supplemental feeding can be accessed from the Nutrition tab in the NSW DPI 'Managing your hives' web page: [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/animals-and-livestock/bees/management](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/animals-and-livestock/bees/management)

## 2022 Pollination News from the US

Hello.

My name is Dave Mendes. I was a commercial beekeeper for several years based out of Florida, USA. This article will update you on almond pollination season 2022.



I am not sure how much Australian beekeepers know about US beekeeping. Almond pollination has been the driving force supporting US beekeeping for several years. In 2021 USDA estimated there were 1.6 million acres of almonds planted with over 1.3 million acres of bearing trees. Up until recently the recommendation was to place 2 hives per acre to pollinate almonds. The USDA also estimated in 2020 that there are 2.88 million hives in the US. If you do the math you quickly see that almost all of the commercial hives in the US are needed for almond pollination. This makes for a crazy market where supply and demand teeters a lot.

Since almonds bloom in late winter the bee supply is often at its lowest point of the year. It gets a little crazy when the bee supply is short. Most contracts call for an 8 frame average of bees per hive. Many growers offer a bonus for stronger hives. When supply is short weaker hives sometimes rent for more than strong hives at the last minute. Sometimes there are too many hives available and then some hives don't get rented. I said almond pollination is supporting the US beekeeping industry. Most commercial beekeepers earn half their annual income from this single pollination. Rental rates vary depending on hive strength and perceived bee supply but in 2022 an 8 frame hive was over \$200. Stronger hives could get as much as \$250 and 6 frame singles were still \$160 or better.

Almonds bloom in February and March in the central valley of California on the west coast. Beekeepers from all over the US send hives to pollinate almonds. After almonds the hives scatter around the country. More than half of the 2 million plus hives spend the summer in the Midwest area of the country on honey locations. Several hundred thousand hives return to the east coast and several hundred thousand remain on the west coast.

Summer honey crop success or failure is a big factor in the quality of next year's hives for almond pollination. The summer of 2021 was really dry in many parts of the Midwest and very small honey crops were produced. This meant that at least half of the hives destined to pollinate almonds in 2022 were stressed going into winter. Also, a factor that you don't yet deal with in Australia is varroa mite pressure. Many beekeepers said they had trouble keeping their mite counts down in 2021.

So the talk in the fall of 2021 amongst commercial beekeepers was about the supply of hives for almond pollination 2022. Many predicted the supply would be short and hoped (or expected) that this would mean a big jump in pollination fees. Several raised their rates when they signed pollination contracts. Some beekeepers didn't sign early contracts with growers thinking that last minute demand would pay off. So... What happened when the dust settled???

I forgot to tell you that bee supply is not the only challenge California almond growers have to deal with. Almond acreage for the last 20 or so years has been steadily growing. Annual crops like cotton or vegetables in the Central valley of California have been replaced with almond trees due to the strong price for almonds in the world. Almond acreage in Australia has increased to over 100,000 acres. Some of you Australian beekeepers are now bringing thousands of hives to pollinate almonds. Almonds like to grow in a very dry climate but still need lots of water. California has struggled with drought and water limits for farmers for many years. Water rights in California are complicated and difficult to understand. Many growers purchase water from the local, State, or Federal water districts. A large portion of the water needed to grow anything in the Central valley of California depends on winter snowfall in the Sierra Nevada Mountains where 20 feet of snow melt fills the reservoirs for next season. This past winter has been dry and some growers were told they would not get enough water needed to grow their crop. No water, No almonds!

So the expected shortage of bees for California almond pollination 2022 worked itself out with several growers cutting back from 2 hives per acre to more like 1.6 or so per acre. I also heard stories of some growers making the difficult decision to take thousands of acres of trees out this year because they didn't have a secure water supply. Consequently, those beekeepers who had strong hives and contracted early rented their hives for a fair price. Some that sent weaker hives hoping that they would be needed at the last minute didn't rent those hives. The market worked itself out so that there were enough hives to set an almond crop for 2022. It was a wild ride for many growers and beekeepers but mostly settled now. The weather forecast for much of the West and Midwest US is more drought this year. Australian beekeepers know all too well what that means for honey production. Let us hope the weather man is wrong. We could all use a good year!!!





Nick Geoghegan, Apiary Sites Program Coordinator, NSW DPI

## Apiary Sites Update

### Illegal placement of hives on public lands.

In a meeting with the NSWAA exec and branch representatives in Tamworth, many apiarists voiced concern about recent occurrences of “Dumping”; apiarists placing hives on sites where other apiarists hold permits\* or where there is not a designated beekeeping site.

Beekeepers are reminded that apiarists can only place hives on public lands if they hold a permit or license for the specific location. Placing hives in other locations may be an offence under the land manager’s respective legislation and can result in fines or termination of your permit. It is also acting contrary to the apiary sites terms and conditions which can result in cancellation of existing permits, affect your priority in applications for EOI sites or affect the renewal of existing permits.

It is the permit holder’s responsibility to ensure their hives are only placed in their designated setdown area or apiary range. If you are unsure of the location of the sites please consult the “My Sites” map in BPASS or contact the Apiary Sites Service Desk. For NPWS sites you must have a setdown location agreed with the local NPWS office before you place your hives.

If you are the holder of an apiary permit and identify another beekeeper who has placed hives on your site or another public land location where an apiary site is not identified on the BPASS map, contact the Apiary Service Desk by phone or email and provide the hive numbers and as much information about the location as you can.

The DPI is working with the land managers to streamline the reporting processes and ensure a consistent enforcement approach.

If the hives are showing signs of disease or neglect, or are creating an nuisance due to their location contact the biosecurity helpline on 1800 680 244.

### Map Enhancements – GPS identification of locations.

Following requests from beekeepers, DPI has developed a new mapping capability within BPASS that makes it easier to identify the location of a setdown site, boundary location or other feature. You can now click on any location within the map and the GPS lat and long coordinates will be displayed in digital format. (e.g. -33.88200, 149.65600). A scale is also displayed on the map at all times.

This is intended to help apiarists:

1. Identify the GPS location of designated setdown sites and ensure it matches what is being used by

the apiarist.

2. Identify the GPS location of site boundaries such as apiary ranges.
3. Identify the GPS location of other features such as road intersections to compare to on the ground readings.

This information can be used in conjunction with readings from GPS devices and other mapping systems (e.g. Google Maps) to compare with actual GPS readings on the ground.

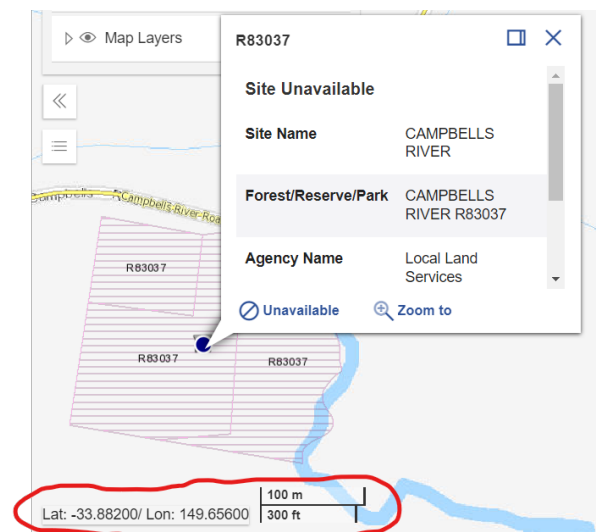
Step by step instructions will be published on the BPASS how to page and a short video will be published on the TOCAL Youtube page. Apiarists are encouraged to use this capability to compare to their on-the-ground experience. If you discover discrepancies with your historical usage of sites please contact the apiary sites helpdesk with as much location information as possible.

\* “Permits” is used here as shorthand for either permits or licenses.

### Next “Expression of Interest” round for recently vacated sites.

With the return to annual permit fees some apiarists have chosen not to continue holding some of their apiary sites. The DPI and the land managers will hold another EOI round in May 2022. To receive updates about this and other EOI rounds, email the apiary sites service desk and request to be added to the updates email list.

For any queries about apiary sites or permits contact the Apiary Sites Service Desk on 02 6391 3464 during business hours or email [apiary.sites@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:apiary.sites@dpi.nsw.gov.au)





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## **Apimondia Update - March 2022**

Jodie Goldsworthy - Apimondia Oceania President

### **Apimondia Congress 2022 - Ufa Russia Cancelled - new location Istanbul - Turkey**

The Apimondia Executive Council has held a number of emergency Executive Council Meetings since the Russian invasion of Ukraine with the sole agenda of discussing the developments in Russia given the fact that our 47th Apimondia Congress was scheduled to be hosted in 6 months in Ufa, Russia. The Executive Council unanimously agreed to cancel the 47th Apimondia Congress in Russia given the terrible events the world is witnessing.

The Executive have now carefully worked through all aspects involved with unwinding such a major complex global event and have now resolved to find a new venue in Europe to allow a congress to continue in 2022 given the fact that the last Apimondia event was held in 2019 (Montreal, Canada).

The event will now be held in Istanbul Turkey between 24th & 28th August with a theme "Bees Unite the World". This event will be a hybrid event where some sessions will be live streamed to registered delegates all around the world making the scientific sessions accessible to beekeepers despite the logistical challenges of global travel in the present environment.

The website is now live and taking registrations: [www.apimondia2021.com](http://www.apimondia2021.com)

### **Our thoughts are with Ukrainian Beekeepers**

Many will remember the hospitality of the Ukrainian beekeepers when the congress was held in Kiev in 2013. Apimondia has been in correspondence with our Ukrainian beekeeping friends and we are moving to set up a mechanism to collect donations to support the people and Ukrainian beekeepers. At this stage support can be directed to Bees for Development, a registered charity who Apimondia previously worked with to direct donations to the African region after the big earthquake in Haiti.

We are also aware that some European beekeepers are registering with their own countries' governments to welcome Ukrainian refugees in their own homes and farms during these very difficult times.

### **Apimondia Congress 2023 - Santiago Chile**

The Apimondia Executive Council continues to work with the Chilean beekeepers and the South American region in planning the 2023 congress in Chile. The local organising team are working to bring together a congress that showcases beekeeping in their region and highlights the unique aspects of their culture, products and beekeeping practices.

### **Joint Planning for the global World Bee Day Celebrations**

Global World Bee Day celebrations centre around joint activities between Apimondia and FAO. FAO is a specialised agency of the United Nations whose mission it is to lead international efforts to defeat hunger and improve nutrition and food security. World Bee Day allows for Apimondia and FAO to work together on the topic of bees and to utilise the networks and strengths of both organisations for the betterment of beekeeping and agriculture worldwide through both FAO's and Apimondia's objectives. In past years important declarations and documents have been forthcoming from government representatives in attendance. In a virtual world plans will take into account the ability for the event to be live streamed around the world.

### **Apimondia / FAO Collaborations - Two Joint Publications:**

#### **How Beekeeping Contributes to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals**

( [https://www.apiservices.biz/documents/articles-en/beekeeping\\_contributes\\_sdg.pdf](https://www.apiservices.biz/documents/articles-en/beekeeping_contributes_sdg.pdf) )

The Apimondia Executive worked in collaboration with FAO to jointly publish a global summary of how beekeeping contributes to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals with each of the Apimondia Executive acting as contributing authors to the publication. The publication states that "beekeeping is an activity that can have an impact on all the 17 SDGs in consideration of the possibility it offers to improve food production systems from the most subsistence production methods to the highly developed technological advanced systems. It can do so without creating pollution or waste. It has a positive impact on biodiversity. Beekeeping brings people together and Apimondia assists in the global dissemination of knowledge about all 17 goals."

I have now received a small number of hard copies of this publication. If any Association in our region wishes to receive a copy for their library or archive, please contact me and I can pass the limited hard copies amongst those who are interested.



## Good Beekeeping Practices for Sustainable Apiculture

This latest Apimondia FAO collaborative publication is available from <https://www.apimondia.org/latest/good-beekeeping-practices-for-sustainable-apiculture> . In particular the Apimondia Working Group on Honey Adulteration, along with the wider Executive Council worked extensively with FAO to ensure that the guidelines were consistent with the Apimondia Statement on Honey Fraud and that good beekeeping practices were aligned to produce high quality safe products from the hive. Many voluntary hours of proofreading, writing and fact checking were contributed by the members of the Apimondia Executive.

### Two other key Apimondia / FAO projects continue

1. **Apimondia are working with FAO to deliver four Biodiversity workshops** aimed at linking regional government officials, farmers and beekeeper pollinators. The workshops will be held in Latin America, Ghana, Philippines and North Africa. The objectives of the workshops are to help provide good agricultural practice examples which support biodiversity and pollinator health in agricultural landscapes. This is an example of Apimondia being at the table to provide expert technical information to improve agricultural landscapes for bees and beekeepers.
2. The second project involves linking a working group from Apimondia with FAO Animal Production Officers through the development of a joint working group on “**Monitoring the genetic diversity of managed bees for food and agriculture**”. FAO manages a system to monitor the genetic diversity of the main livestock breeds and has recently added bees to this work. This project will slowly begin to monitor the subspecies of bees to better be able to understand bee population trends to assist better decision making globally. It is envisaged that there will be a trial data collection in up to six countries with the view to then rolling out to all countries. Apimondia is assisting the FAO Livestock Officers to work through mechanisms available for data collection options, challenges and opportunities.

### New Apimondia Website

Apimondia is pleased to now have on board a **Communications Officer** who has done a splendid job of building a new website and who is now working to support the volunteer efforts that bring newsletters and events to beekeepers globally. Take the time to look at the new Apimondia website when you have a chance.

<https://www.apimondia.org/>

Stay safe and well everyone.

Jodie



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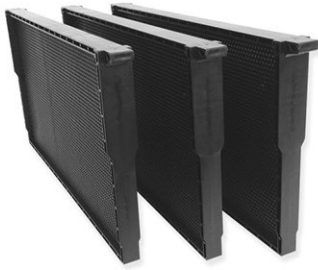
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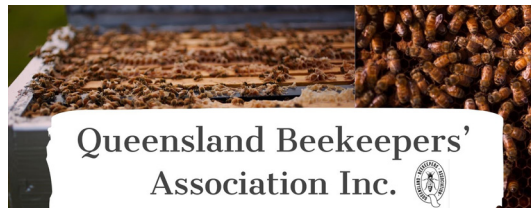
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## Queensland Beekeepers' Association Inc.

It is with great sadness I write to inform our members of the passing of Queensland Beekeepers' Association Life Member, Mr Keith Douglas Stacey. Keith passed on the 16th of February 2022 at the age of 92 years.

Keith was a much loved member of the QBA, initially joining the association in 1965. He celebrated his 25 year membership in 1990, and later inducted as a Life Member in 1992 for his service and contribution to the association.

Keith's involvement with the QBA has a long a rich history. Within the Warwick branch Keith was known as the longest serving Branch Secretary, holding the position for 18 years. Keith also volunteered his time as President and as the Executive Representative for the Warwick Branch.

On behalf of the Management Committee of the Queensland Beekeepers' Association, we extend our sincere heartfelt condolences to Keith's wife Mavis, their

Children, Grandchildren and Great-Grandchildren at this very sad time.

A service of remembrance will take place in Warwick tomorrow, 25th February 2022 at the Warwick Baptist Church at 10.30am.

In lieu of flowers the family has requested donations can be made to "The Bible Society of Australia".

Please find Keith's funeral notice below.

Kind regards,

Jo Martin  
QBA State Secretary



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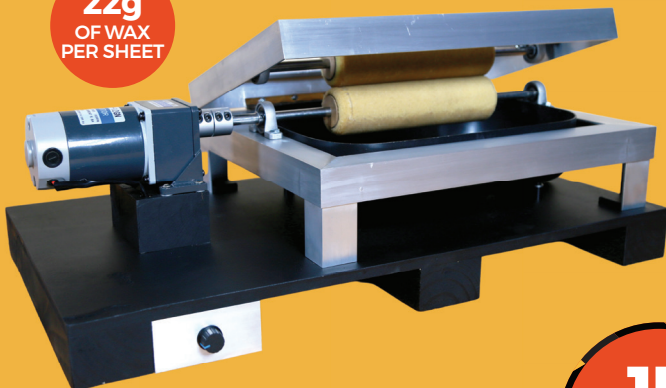
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# BEE BIOSECURITY OFFICER REPORT



Rod Bourke - NSW Bee Biosecurity Officer  
NSW Department of Primary Industries - Biosecurity NSW  
Tocal Ag College, Tocal Rd Paterson NSW 2320  
Ph: 02 4939 8946 Mob: 0438 677 195 Email: rod.bourke@dpi.nsw.gov.au



## 2022 Almond pollination best practice

As we move into autumn professional and experienced almond pollinators have already completed most of their hive preparations to get their bees ready for dropping into almond orchards in late July-early August. For those that are thinking about going (or have committed already) but have not yet started preparing the hives then it's time to decide whether you will actually go or not, and if you are then get them sorted ASAP.

The general rule of thumb is that almond pollination hives need to average 8 frames of bees. A "frame of bees" equates to a full-depth frame being 3/4 covered with bees (on both sides) at an ambient temperature of 15 degrees Celsius. At this temperature the bees have not fully broken cluster (but some have already left the hive to forage) and you can get a reasonable idea of how many bees are in the colony. At colder temperatures the cluster may be tighter so it appears that there are less bees in a colony. Above 15 Celsius the bees quickly start to thin out (cluster is fully broken by 18 Celsius) and cover more frames in the hive, so to the untrained eye the colony may appear stronger than it actually is.

Experienced hive auditors (that routinely audit pollination hives on commercial orchards) take many things into consideration when they audit bees, as they often have to work in sub-optimal conditions when it may be very cold, windy and/or raining. The most important thing they are looking for is if there are enough bees in the hives.

Good beekeepers therefore learn to assess hive strength, as this skill also enables them to be able to "read" their hives and therefore know or "feel" more accurately on what their bees can and cannot do or what they might be wanting them to achieve next. If you are not sure how to learn this skill then consider learning this through RTO training (eg. Tocal's Using bees for pollination course) or from a more experienced beekeeper, as it really is important to be able to assess your hive strength.



*This hive is perfect strength.*



*3 frames of bees...don't send it to almonds.*



*Don't send anything like this.*



*This hive is definitely up to scratch.*

Depending on your broker they may be fine with you sending an assortment of colony strengths ranging from 6 frames right up to 14-16 frames of bees, just as long as your average still hits 8 frames or more. Other brokers may require a minimum of 7 frames of bees, whilst some may be happy with 5 or even less. Whatever the case, make sure that you are not sending anything weak or dead.

If your broker does not accept poor quality bees then you are far less likely to pick up disease, as lower quality colonies are the ones that will get robbed more readily and therefore enable AFB to spread. For beekeepers who are more concerned about their own biosecurity, try to work in with a broker who does not accept weak hives.

I have tagged along as an observer on DPI apiary compliance operations, and have seen many amazing and unbelievable things on those trips (the good, the bad and the downright UGLY!). The one thing that always surprises me is how quickly DPI Compliance staff (including trainees with little bee experience yet) can accurately identify weak or dead hives in large loads of bees.

Whenever DPI compliance staff arrive at an apiary one of the first things they do is walk the entire site looking at entrance activity, and from that they will identify hives that look “suspicious”. This “walk around” only takes a few minutes and around 90% of the time an identified hive with weak entrance activity will be weak (or dead) when it is opened up.

The big question is why didn't the person that owns and manages those bees pick up on these underperforming hives before they were even loaded onto a truck somewhere else?

Unfortunately the likely answer is because they did not actually look! Every time you arrive to an apiary one of the first things you should do is the walk around looking at EVERY entrance to assess activity or signs that something is wrong. Good beekeepers often just go for a drive to look at loads like this and pull out the weak stuff.

I've heard a lot of excuses from beekeepers with weak hives at almonds like “they were alright when I loaded them, they must have taken a hit of Nosema after we got here”. The reality was these bees probably never were almond pollinating material and for a beekeeper to say otherwise is unprofessional. Due to the weakened state of these colonies just the stress of loading and moving them to almonds was probably a bigger hit than they could take, so they should never have been moved in the first place! Don't promise more than you can actually provide.

There is a section of the almond pollinators who basically just aim to send every hive that they own, whether they are booming or bust, because they feel it's just too hard to “split loads” (and leave the unsuitable hives elsewhere). They are the biggest biosecurity risk at almond pollination. Other operators would do well to keep away from them, so it's good to have a discussion with your broker about any concerns you may have. These poor quality bees also provide the poorest value for money to the farms that they are put on, which negatively impacts all beekeepers and this poor experience by a few farmers' continues to drive down pollination prices for the vast majority (who provide better bees and better results).

Beekeepers who consistently provide good quality bees to pollination should be rewarded, as they make

the broker's job “easier” (please note that having personally spent time with brokers I saw that dealing with beekeepers is often not all that easy). An operator with a good reputation will find it easier to get a regular yearly spot on an orchard, especially in a year like this one where honey prices are down and more beekeepers (that don't normally pollinate) are looking to put bees on almonds to bolster their finances.

Almond farmers and brokers welcome and love good beekeepers, so to ensure your hives are set up and ready to go you need to always be covering the following preparation jobs;

- Re-queen hives as necessary. Hives re-queened after Christmas are often exceptional hives on almonds that coming season, and if it is one of those times when lots of hives swarm on almonds they are often the ones that hold off swarming (but have lids full of bees) and become fantastic production hives through spring.

- If you are sending singles then generally ensure they had achieved a suitable strength and be full of honey by March-April, as in most areas they won't have conditions to continue expanding their population much before almonds. By removing the excluder (which you can clean over winter) you simply need to crack the lid, lift up the mat and quickly look at the brood nest in late autumn and again in the weeks leading up to transport to almonds to ensure that they are strong enough. Identify and remove any weaker colonies from the load before you put anything on the truck. These weaker hives can be managed whilst the stronger ones are on almonds.

- For overwintering doubles your hive assessment has a few options, which you could start looking at from late-summer or autumn and right up to loading for almonds. You could firstly just lift the lid and mat and look down at the amount of bees that are above the excluder (which is less invasive), or you could split the hive and tilt up the top box to look at coverage on the bottom of that box and under excluder. On a very cold day this really shows how strong they are/ are not (as long as queen is not up there), and if you have good numbers then you probably don't need to look any further. Be careful not to squash bees when putting everything back together. If there were few or no bees seen above the excluder on a cold day then it may not need that box at all. You as the beekeeper need to evaluate management actions depending on;

- 1 - The amount of bees above the excluder and in the colony
- 2 - Time of season and any floral resource opportunities
- 3 - Amount of honey stores below the excluder

You may wish to turn it into a single or leave it as a double, but if that colony contains the equivalent of only 6-7 frames of bees (or less) then it should definitely only



be a single until spring arrives.

- Don't work your hives into the ground in autumn. If you are working autumn or winter honey flows then don't get greedy and chase extra boxes of honey at the expense of your bee population. If there are no good pollens coming in then supplement feed protein, get 1-2 boxes of honey, shut them down, and ensure they are heavy, tight and rested until early canola or almonds. Making them try for that extra honey may wipe them out, so learn balance in managing your bees and quit whilst you are ahead.

- non-invasive inspections of hives (not removing frames so that bees are not disturbed) can be done in almost all temperatures over the cool seasons (some say the colder the better) and in light rain. This means that all beekeepers have the ability to open ALL their hives and determine if they will be good enough to send (so there really are no excuses for sending junk). These inspections are quick to complete and one beekeeper can look at hundreds of hives per day. Any weak hives should be marked and either swapped out with better ones or pulled off pallets and the load rearranged before going onto the truck. Main priority is to not send junk.

- Uniting a bunch of failing or weak nucs and hives in late-autumn/winter is probably not going to make great pollination hives a few weeks (or winter months) later, so don't leave any of that work until too late in the season. Don't send singles to almonds that only have enough bees that they should be in a nuc box instead.



*There isn't even a nuc worth of bees in these two put together-don't send them to almonds.*

- Get all your jobs done before it gets too late into autumn, as depending on your location within NSW (or beyond) you may be able to do more or less to your bees over winter, so get to know your area and the seasons well and work out if or by when you can or cannot be doing anything to your bees.

- Colonies that have enough honey stores but are a frame or two short of bees in early or mid-winter may

benefit from a few small feeds (0.25-1.0 L) of 1:1 sugar syrup 4-7 weeks before almonds to stimulate extra laying by the queen (extra bees would hatch 3-4 weeks after a stimulating feed).

- Hives with enough bees and inadequate honey stores would benefit from being reduced to a single and getting 1 or 2 big feeds of heavy sugar syrup (2:1) in a top feeder. Some may even shake some of those extra bees into a weaker hive, but be very careful about doing invasive bee work over the cold months as sometimes that stress and stimulation ends up doing more harm to hive health than good.

- If your bees are going to early canola or wild turnip etc. before almonds then this gives you another good opportunity to identify any weak hives and manage/ unite/remove them from the load before they hit almonds. Early pollen sources often stimulates bees through access to plenty of good pollen, but they probably won't get much or any nectar so ensure bees have stores so they won't starve or go backwards. Some even feed syrup if required.

At the end of the day every beekeeper has a duty under the Code to manage weak hives and prevent opportunities of robbing to occur, and almond pollination is one of the critical events of the new season that beekeepers should ensure they are 110% following that management standard with their bees. If a hive is not up to standard then DON'T SEND IT TO ALMONDS!



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# BRANCH NEWS

## SOUTHERN TABLELANDS BRANCH

Our branch meetings are an essential link to the industry and for your business. Offering opportunities to discuss your thoughts, ideas and concerns in a comfortable relaxing environment.

The Southern Tablelands branch members enjoyed a delicious lunch together before we began the AGM on the 5th March @ the Murrumbateman Inn.

Our branch appreciates the NSWAA executive members who have been able to attend their branch meeting. How fortunate were we to have Steve Fuller to attend our AGM, his second visit down south within 10 months, giving our branch members an update with resources and Bpass. Remember though, there were floods at Steve's doorstep and he still travelled 20 hours return, to meet his prior commitments.

Great discussion amongst our members who attended, a unanimous decision for a First Aid Course is planned for the June meeting.

Our branch has a few new faces plus familiar ones too, welcome on board Zac Alcock (Vice President), Garth McClay (Secretary) and Therese Kershaw (Treasurer) looking forward to working with you.

Laurie Kershaw  
President



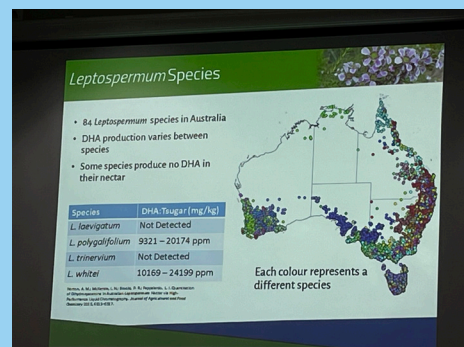
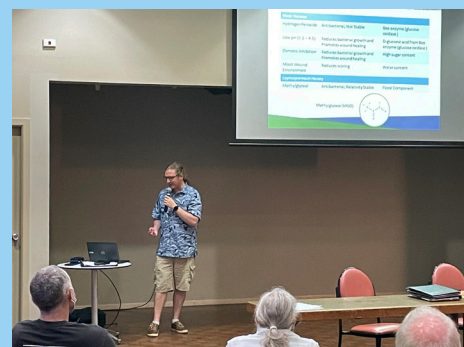
## NORTH COAST BRANCH

North Coast Branch of the NSW Apiarist Association held their first meeting of the year on the 28th January at the Casino RSM club.

Approximately 20 interested members and friends turned up to hear Dr Simon Williams give a very informative talk on the latest research involving Australia's Leptospermum trees. A big thank you to Dr Simon Williams for being available.

As always, any member or interested beekeeper who is in the area when we have a meeting scheduled, you are welcome to attend. We hold our meeting on the 4th Friday of every second month (January, March, May, July, September, November)

Steve Fuller  
North Coast President



## NSWAA Riverina Branch AGM

Rules Club Wagga Wagga

6pm for dinner and fellowship (optional)

**Meeting 7.30pm Monday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2022**

**ALL welcome including partners**



Photo  
Warren Jones

## Branch Meeting Dates

### Sydney Metro

First Tuesday of every month at 7.30pm at Chifley College Bidwell Campus, Daniels Road, Bidwell.

### Central Tablelands

January - third Tuesday  
April - third Tuesday  
July - third Tuesday  
October - third Tuesday

### Riverina

Our meeting dates are usually in the first week of February, May, August, and November each year. Lately our meetings have been held alternatively between Wagga Wagga and Griffith.

Usually on the first Monday, when held in Wagga Wagga and on the first Thursday, when held in Griffith.

The venues change to suit availability.

### North Coast

Meetings are generally held on the last Friday of January, March, May, July, September & November

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Matthew Skinner 0427 651 360  
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Jane Flitter 0413 769 411  
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Lisa Mumford 02 6887 2638

### EMAIL

centraltablelandsbranch@nswaa.com.au  
huntervalleybranch@nswaa.com.au  
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### AUSTRALIAN QUEEN BEE BREEDERS ASSOCIATION (AQBBA)

**Secretary:** Mr Richard Simms, 40 Kyle Rd Murwillumbah NSW 2484 Ph: 0468 481 768 Email: [AQBBA21@gmail.com](mailto:AQBBA21@gmail.com)

### CROP POLLINATION ASSOCIATION (CPA)

**Secretary:** Mrs Debbie Porter, 135 Eusdale Road Yetholme NSW 2795 Ph: 0429 3785 383 Email: [debbie.porter3@hotmail.com](mailto:debbie.porter3@hotmail.com)

### HONEY PACKERS & MARKETERS ASSOCIATION (HPMAA)

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